CASB Convention 2009

Delivery of Services

• Presentation by:
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What can we learn?

• School District Delivery of Services

• Knowledge from other states?

• Differentiation of consolidation of services and of school districts

• What goals are trying to be accomplished
CSFP Interest in School District Organization

- How education services are delivered
- Recognizes that services can be organized in numerous ways
- Believes the issue is extremely complex given:
  - Distribution of people in states
  - Existing geographical/political boundaries
  - Changes in technology
  - Multitude of roles played by schools
What CSFP Asked APA to DO

- Examine the issue of school district consolidation
- CSFP had no specific objective in mind and that APA should not reach a specific conclusion...
- … particularly about Colorado
- Focus on what research says about the impacts of organization structure and change in structure

Objectives of the Work

- Review the historical development of school districts
- Examine how the number of schools/districts has changed over time
- Examine the research about school district consolidation:
  - Cost savings
  - Program scope
  - Impact on community
  - Alternative delivery approaches
How We Went About the Work

- Gathered and organized information about school districts
- Reviewed the literature (research and “research”)
- Interviewed several people

Table 1: Change Over Time in Numbers of Students, School Districts and Schools in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>School Districts</th>
<th>One-Teacher Schools</th>
<th>Elementary Schools</th>
<th>Secondary Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number (in millions)</td>
<td>% Change from Prior Period</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% Change from Prior Period</td>
<td>Average Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-20</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>187,948</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-40</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>117,108</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>113,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-60</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>40,520</td>
<td>-65.4%</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>17,995</td>
<td>-55.6%</td>
<td>2,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>-10.9%</td>
<td>15,912</td>
<td>-11.6%</td>
<td>2,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>15,358</td>
<td>-3.5%</td>
<td>2,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>14,760</td>
<td>-3.9%</td>
<td>2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>14,859</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>14,168</td>
<td>-4.7%</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Distribution of All Districts in the United States (with Reported Size) and Students by District Size Group in 2005-06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Enrollment Size Group</th>
<th>&gt;25,000</th>
<th>10,000-24,999</th>
<th>5,000-9,999</th>
<th>2,500-4,999</th>
<th>1,000-2,499</th>
<th>600-999</th>
<th>300-599</th>
<th>&lt;300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Districts</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>1,066</td>
<td>2,015</td>
<td>3,335</td>
<td>1,768</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>2,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of All Districts</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>16,376,213</td>
<td>9,055,547</td>
<td>7,349,010</td>
<td>7,114,942</td>
<td>5,442,588</td>
<td>1,391,314</td>
<td>835,430</td>
<td>403,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of All Students</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Size of Districts</td>
<td>60,878</td>
<td>15,245</td>
<td>6,894</td>
<td>3,531</td>
<td>1,632</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research on Consolidation

- Research vs. advocacy for or against
- Overview
  - Optimal size of school districts
  - Costs and efficiency
  - Academic quality (achievement and opportunity)
  - Community/economic impacts and governance
Optimal District Size

- Depends on goals and student needs
- Most studies identify a U-shaped cost (per student) optimization curve
- Recommended “optimal” size varies greatly among studies and among rural and urban communities
- The effects of district size are mitigated by a host of other factors, such as school size

Costs and Efficiency

- District size research provides some support for economies of scale
- Efficiency research (cost of achieving an outcome) suggests that costs per high school graduate are similar between large and small districts
- Research on costs before & after consolidation is mixed
- Long-term savings may be possible in some cases
- Potential economies of scale are often offset by post-consolidation increases in transportation, capital outlay, and average salaries
Academic Quality

- Studies of district size find that students in smaller districts often outperform students in larger districts.
- Low-income students tend to benefit more than high-income students from small district size.
- Academic and extracurricular opportunities are generally more extensive in larger districts.
- Small remote districts can have trouble recruiting high-quality teachers.
- Larger districts tend to offer more opportunities for teacher professional development and collaboration.

Community Impacts and Governance

- District consolidation often leads to school closure(s).
- Communities with schools tend to have notable economic advantages over those without schools.
- School closures frequently have negative economic impacts on rural communities.
- It does not appear that school closures have significant negative impacts on property values or tax rates.
- School closures tend to decrease parent and civic participation.
- Large or consolidated districts may be more bureaucratic and less responsive to citizens.
Alternatives to Consolidation

- Intermediate Units
  - BOCS, BOCES, IUs, etc.
  - Providing services on an "as needed" basis with reimbursement by users of services
  - Academic, particularly for high-need students
  - Academic support (specialists, professional development, etc.)
  - Administrative support (accounting, purchasing, etc.)

Alternatives to Consolidation

- Technology
  - Delivery of services using virtual courses

- Regionalization
  - Multiple elementary districts belonging to a single secondary district
  - Multiple districts forming a technology service area
Conclusions

- Don’t use a “one size fits all” approach; develop a process and provide support (e.g., analysis, incentives).
- Define what objective/goal trying to accomplish
- The use of intermediate units can provide better service and reduce expenditures in a variety of areas from low-enrollment courses, to serving high-cost student populations, to administrative support; interviewees universally noted the value of IUs in staff development.

Colorado Snapshot

- 178 School Districts
- 63 Counties
- CASB Regions - 12
- BOCES – 21
- Regional Service Areas
- Enrollment Trends
What services are school districts sharing?

- Your examples?
- Need ideas?
- What are goals of community and school districts as changes occur?
- Other?

- Full report and detailed information
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  - Tracie.rainey@earthlink.net